

VZCZCXRO5178
OO RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHMA RUEHPB RUEHROV
DE RUEHEG #7249 3620910
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 280910Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3053
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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STATE FOR NEA/ELA, AIAG FOR WINN
AMMAN FOR WHITTLESEY

E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: EGYPT: THREE NEW HUMAN AVIAN INFLUENZA CASES

REF: CAIRO 6326

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¶1. (SBU) Officials from the Central Public Health Lab at the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) and NAMRU-3 confirmed on December 24 two new cases of H5N1 and a probable third in a family in the northern governorate of Gharbia, the most recent human cases since October (reftel). All three succumbed to the disease. Assuming the third case is confirmed, a total of ten people have died out of eighteen diagnosed with avian influenza in Egypt since the virus was first discovered in humans in February, 2006.

¶2. (SBU) On December 14, a twenty-six year old male from the village of Kafr Alhanoot, approximately 55 miles north of Cairo, developed flu-like symptoms. On December 17, he and a thirty year old female family member were admitted to the Zifta Fever Hospital. On December 20, a third family member, a fifteen year old female, was admitted with the same symptoms, and shortly after all three were transferred to Abbassiya Chest Hospital in Cairo and administered Tamiflu. The two females succumbed to the virus on December 24 and 25, while the male died on December 27.

¶3. (SBU) Though all initially denied having contact with poultry, the victims were among at least twenty family members living in a forty square meter communal house with poor ventilation and no windows that also housed a flock of ducks. The mother of the fifteen year old victim told MOHP that ten young ducks living in the house died in early December and three more died on December 12. She slaughtered the remainder on December 13, though she and all other family members tested negative for H5N1. Health authorities in Gharbia examined residents in the village for AI symptoms, but found no other cases. They also interviewed local residents who indicated their domestic poultry had not been vaccinated against H5N1.
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